

# Fingerprints - Standardized Evaluation of Latent Print Developers

Quality assurance is essential for every forensic laboratory in the 21st century. Currently, however, there are no standard tests available for checking the performance of a fingerprint reagent before it is applied to an exhibit. If no marks are developed on an item, there is no way of knowing for certain if this is because there were no detectable marks. It may be that the reagent used was not prepared correctly or had reached the end of its usable lifetime.

The Forensic Science Service® (FSS®) has been working to develop a simple, low cost, standardized method that will determine in a matter of minutes whether reagents are working correctly at the time of use. This standardized method is applicable to the following reagents:

- ◆ Ninhydrin
- ◆ DFO
- ◆ Physical Developer

A simple image analysis procedure makes the system truly objective.

The batch of reagent used to develop the test sheet below (a) could ordinarily have been used on an exhibit associated with a serious crime. This test result, however, alerted the scientist that the reagent was not performing to its optimum (b) and a fresh batch of reagent was prepared. Without this test, marks may have been missed and an offender may have gone undetected.



a) Test result at time of reagent use.



b) Level of expected development if reagent is working correctly.

For further information please contact:

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